

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /080 W  
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R 021605Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9558

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IV, NI

SUBJ: SIGNS OF IMPROVING NIGERIAN-IVORIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: DURING ECOWAS CONFERENCE NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE GENERAL GOWON AND IVORY COAST PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY SEEM TO HAVE MADE SPECIAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THEIR COUNTRIES' BILATERAL RELATIONS, RESTORED IN 1973 BUT STILL SUFFERING STRAINS FROM THE BIAFRA PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

1. IVORY COAST PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, IN LAGOS AIRPORT PRESS INTERVIEW MAY 30, STATED PRESENCE IN IVORY COAST OF FORMER BIAFRA LEADER OJUKWU SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DISRUPT EXISTING CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN HIS NATION AND NIGERIA. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED OJUKWU MATTER WITH GENERAL GOWN IN A "HEART-TO-HEART" TALK MAY 29 AND THEY AGREED IT WAS "UNIMPORTANT" IN RELATIONS TO COMMON EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LOT OF PEOPLE IN BOTH COUNTRIES. HOUPHOUET CALLED FOR CONTINUED BROTHERLY COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO NATIONS, AND DISMISSED AS "BASELESS" FEAR THAT NIGERIA MIGHT DOMINATE ECOWAS.

2. GENERAL GOWON ALSO TOUCHED ON NIGERIAN/IVORY COAST RELATIONS  
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IN STATEMENT SPECIALLY RECORDED FOR HOUPHOUET DEPARTURE. GOWON

TERMED HOUPHOUET PRESENCE AT ECOWAS SUMMIT A "REMARKABLE" IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES; HIS FIVE-HOUR DISCUSSION WITH HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY MAY 29 WAS, HE SAID, "CLEAR EVIDENCE OF DETERMINATION TO ESTABLISH FRUITFUL COOPERATION". GOWN ALSO ANNOUNCED HE HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO VISIT IVORY COAST AT AN UNSPECIFIED DATE.

3. COMMENT: GOWON ACCORDED HOUPHOUET PLACE OF HONOR THROUGHOUT AND SEEMED DETERMINED TO HAVE HOUPHOUET WITH HIM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. THEY BOTH MADE EFFORTS TO BURY THEIR PAST DIFFERENCES, AND IT APPEARS THAT SOME GENUINE CAMMERADERIE MAY HAVE DEVELOPED BETWEEN TWO LEADERS. FMG SEEMS TO HAVE MADE SOME HEADWAY IN REDUCING FEARS THAT NIGERIA MIGHT DOMINATE ECOWAS, WITH HOUPHOUET HIMSELF ADDING A CALMING WORD. FMG WILLINGNESS TO DOWNPLAY OJUKWU PROBLEM SEEMS SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR FULL-FLEDGED IVORIAN SUPPORT FOR ECOWAS.  
EASUM

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 02 MAY 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** greeneet  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750193-0108  
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**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 AUG 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <11 DEC 2003 by greeneet>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SIGNS OF IMPROVING NIGERIAN-IVORIAN RELATIONS SUMMARY: DURING ECOWAS CONFERENCE NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, IV, NI, ECOWAS, (GOWON, YAKUBU), (HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, FELIX)  
**To:** ABIDJAN  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006